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## Funding For BART To South Bay Gets Fed Approval

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SAN JOSE -- The BART extension to San Jose has gotten one step closer to becoming a reality after receiving federal approval Monday, according to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, and San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales today announced that the Federal Transit Administration has given the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor BART expansion project a rating of "recommended" and approved the project to enter into preliminary engineering.

The approval will pave the way for more detailed engineering design work.

"This approval was gained after a thorough and rigorous three-month evaluation by the FTA and is a critical milestone in the BART expansion project," explained Honda, who worked closely with the FTA to secure its approval before the end of the legislative session in October.

"It's a required step. With this approval, we are now eligible for New Starts funding in this year's House Transportation Appropriations Bill. As this legislative session comes to an end, securing funds for BART is a top priority."

Gonzales, who is also chairman of the VTA Board of Directors, was also pleased to hear the news from Washington, D.C.

"Bringing BART to Santa Clara County will help fulfill our long-term vision for a complete and effective transportation system in the Bay Region that will relieve traffic congestion and provide the foundation for smart growth in the future."

The BART extension project has gotten support from a number of other Bay Area and federal elected officials as well, including Democratic U.S. Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, U.S. Reps. Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose, Anna Eshoo, D-Santa Clara, and Richard Pombo, R-Tracy.

VTA officials are currently pursuing a Fiscal Year 2003 appropriation of \$5 million for preliminary engineering from the federal New Starts program, which is scheduled to be heard by the U.S. House of Representatives this fall.

The Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor project is part of Santa Clara County's Measure A program, which voters overwhelmingly passed in Nov.



2000.

Once completed, the project would extend the BART line to the South Bay, with stops in Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara.

Source: [KTVU/Fox2](#) and Associated Press

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